



SRGG

Bulb Log Diary

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BULB LOG 19.....10th May 2017





This Bulb Log is one I prepared earlier because as it goes online I am a delegate at the Czech International Conference. I was taken by the way the sunlight illuminated the foliage of the fern and **Rogersia** temporarily transforming them to glow like a stained glass window. I want to develop on a topic I touched on last week which is

planting so that foliage covers the ground completely, acting as a living mulch. So often we hear about rainfall

levels, a figure that on its own does not really tell us that much because to understand the full effect on our plants we also need to know the evaporation rate. Two areas could have identical rainfall but if one is very hot and/or windy the benefit of the moisture to the plants could be very short lived as the water quickly evaporates away, while in a cool area it will remain in the ground for the plants to use.

Plants use moisture as they transpire and grow and you might think that by growing them as closely as we do that the

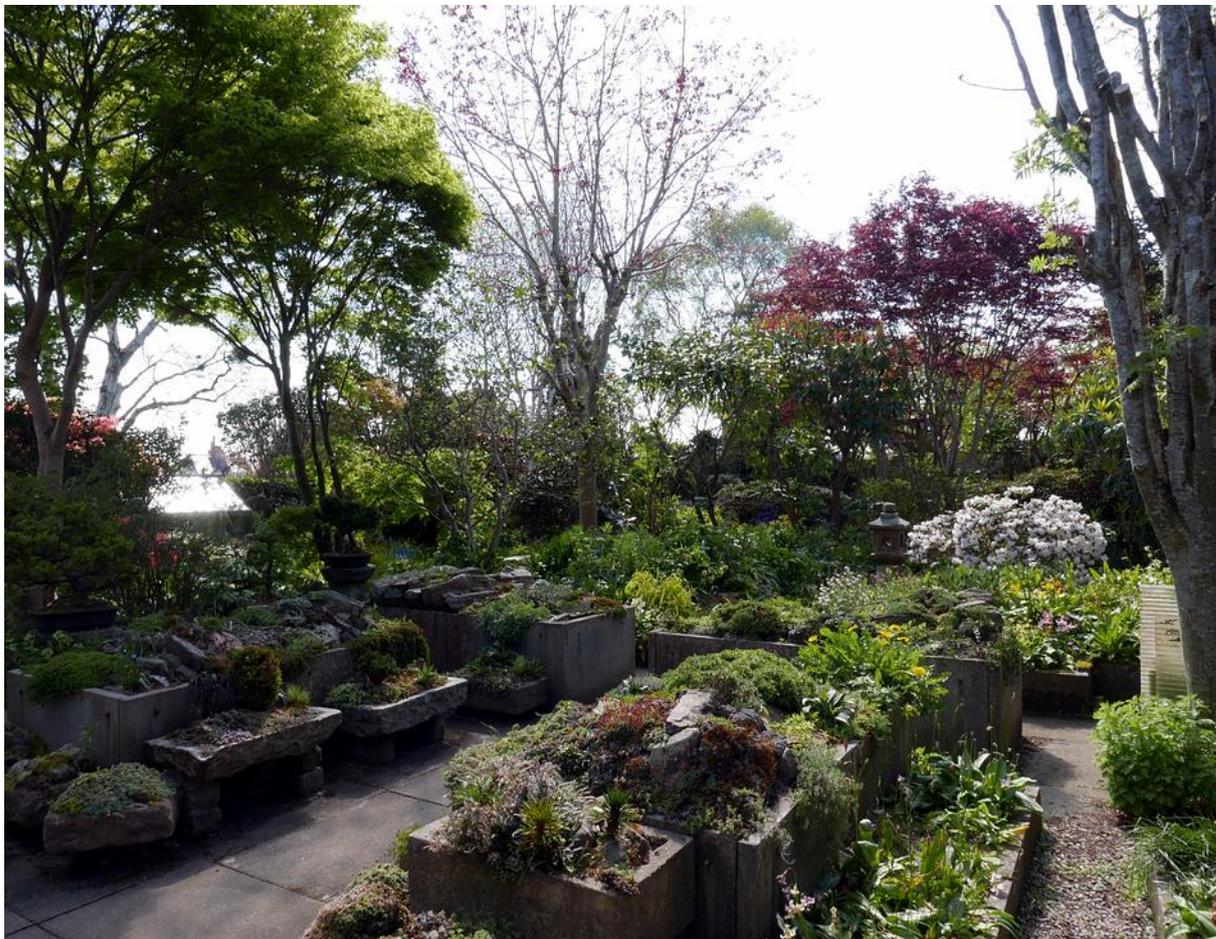
competition for the moisture would be a problem however it can be the opposite where they become a mutually supportive community. The cover of their foliage will shade the ground, keeping it cooler and reducing the speed at which moisture evaporates - even if some moisture does evaporate directly from the soil it will be partially trapped in the air under the foliage cover where it can still benefit the plants.

In addition to these benefits I just like having wall to wall plants with no, or few, signs of bare ground with a succession of flowering periods and seasons for as long as possible.





By choosing your plants carefully they will grow as a self-supporting community in a mass naturalistic planting.



It is not just about the close ground cover but also cover at many levels, all of which will add shade. Preventing direct sunshine heating the ground up excessively reduces the evaporation allowing the plants to make most efficient use of the available moisture. We have a number of levels from the larger trees, then large and small shrubs before you get down to the ground cover plants. When the leaf canopy is

complete we can feel the different temperature and moisture levels in the air as we walk in and out of shade.



Medium shrubs



Small shrubs and ground cover.



Anemone nemerosa forms are great low ground cover plants that team up with many of the other bulbs and plants.



Higher foliage levels provide partial and temporary shade which changes as the sun moves across the sky. At ground level the natural style plantings provide shade to the ground while allowing feature plants to thrive like the spiky foliage of **Aciphylla glauca**.



Aciphylla glauca

Aciphylla glauca flowers every several years, the rosette that sends up its towering flower spike, which can reach 2 metres high, will die out but provided the growing conditions are favourable side rosettes will form around the base.



Grown from seed collected in Japan - **Ledum palustre** which we should now call *Rhododendron tomentosum* but I am sticking with *Ledum*.





Podophyllum hexandrum and Matteuccia struthiopteris



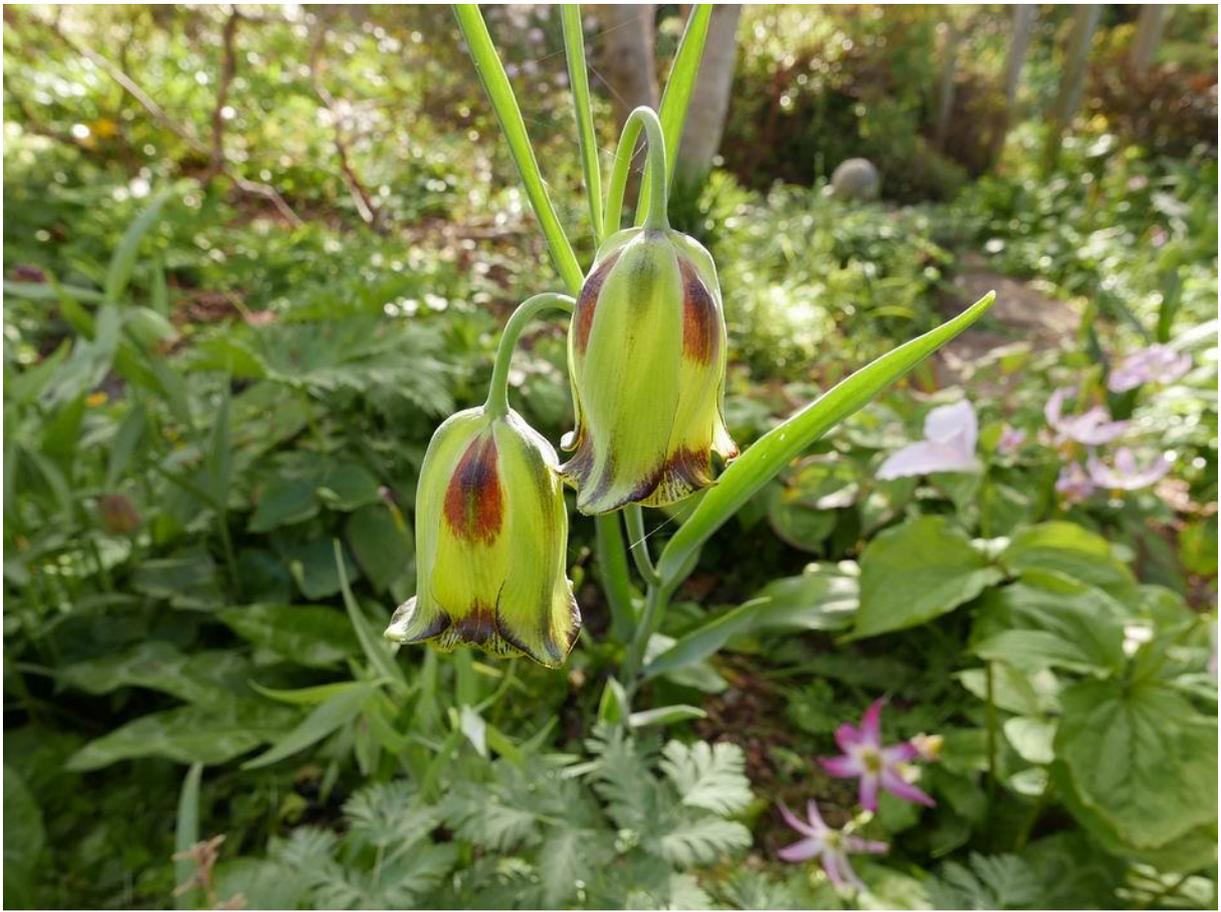
Outside frame with Fritillaria and Anemone in flower.



Fritillaria pallidiflora is very happy growing up through a carpet of ground covering plants in the garden beds.



Fritillaria pyrenaica



Fritillaria acmopetala



Pteridophyllum racemosum

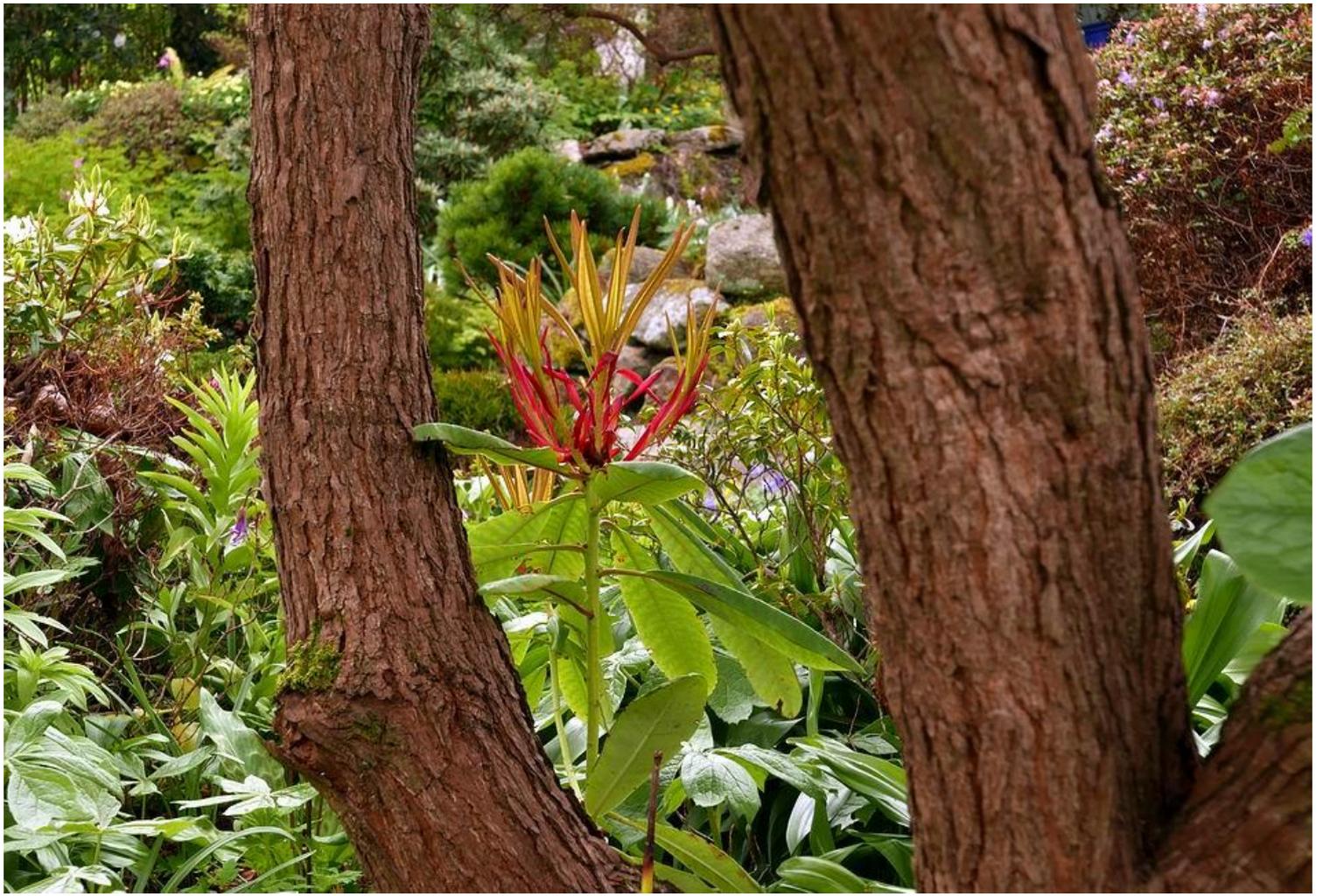


Pond



I had to put a temporary wire cover over my **Pinguicloa** rock while the birds were nesting because they began to strip the moss.

I am interested to see if the *Dactylorhiza* that have seeded into the moss will be able to develop into flowering plants in this shallow layer of moss.



Rhododendron decorum



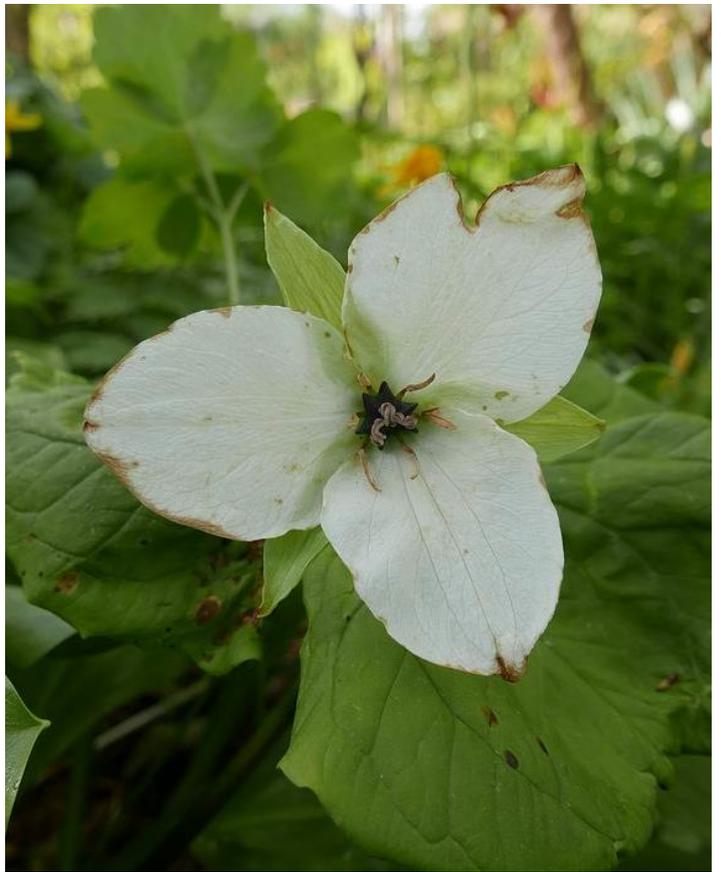
Celmisia semicordata and Corydalis flexuosa



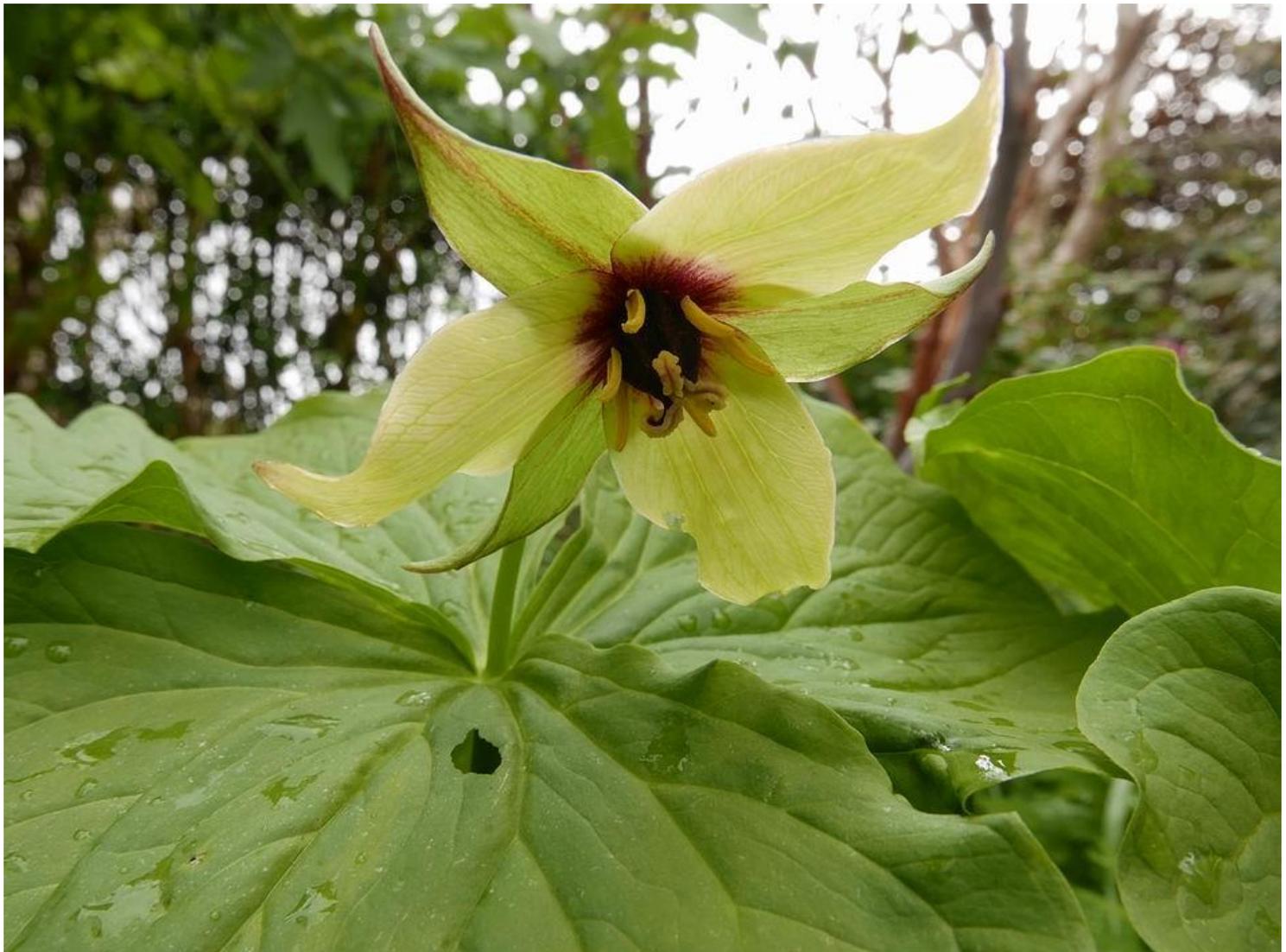
Podophyllum 'Spotty Dotty' with *Dicentra formosa* ground cover.



Trillium erectum



Trillium erectum and its white form, both bearing the scars of our recent wintery weather, give rise to a lot of hybrids in our garden.



Trillium erectum hybrid



Trillium erectum hybrid

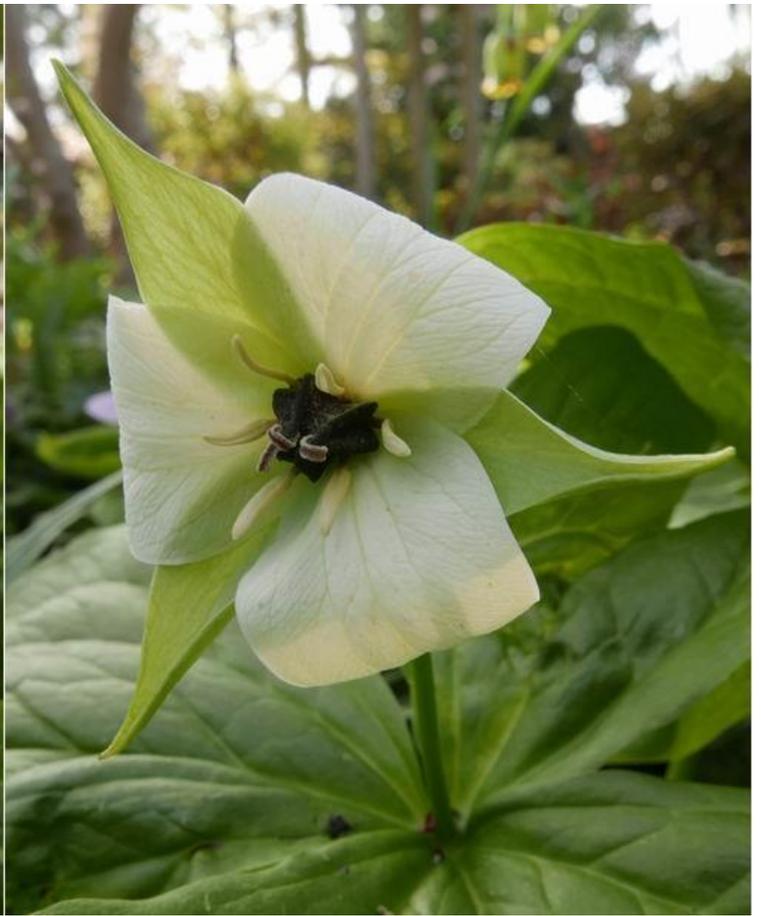


Trillium erectum hybrid

Trillium erectum will hybridise with Trillium flexipes and simile among others.



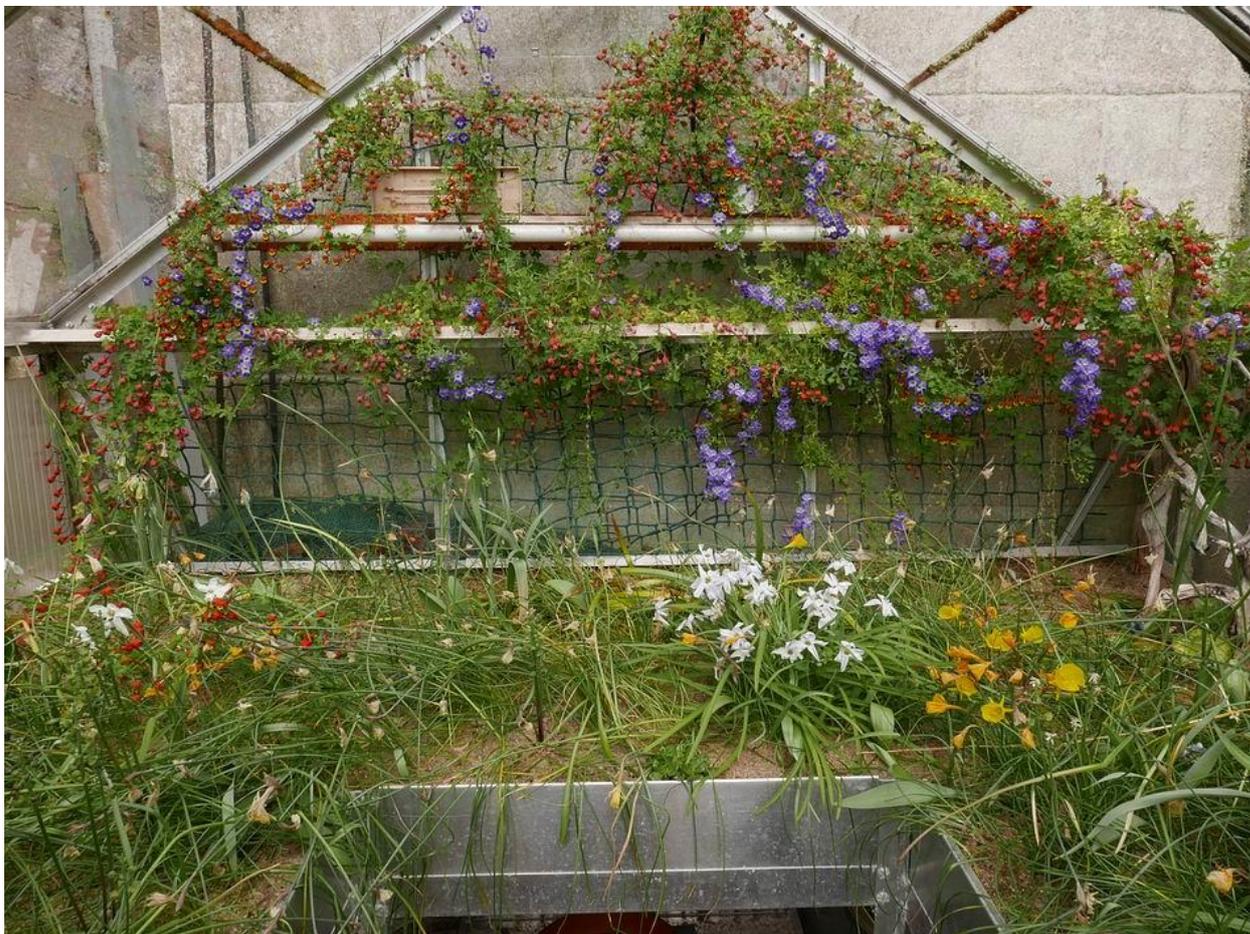
Trillium flexipes



Trillium simile



Trillium albidum with Corydalis flexuosa



With just a few Narcissus, Ipheion and Calochortus flowers the sand bed in the bulb house is nearing the end of its main flowering season but *Tropaeolum azureum* and *tricolorum* make sure that it is going out with a blaze of colour.



Tropaeolum azureum* and *tricolorum



**Tropaeolum
tricolorum**

In one of the
other bulb
houses we have a
wall of
Tropaeolum
tricolorum.



Bulb house



I cannot resist sharing one more colourful image of **Tropaeolum azureum** and **tricolorum**.....